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TAM O'SHANTER;

A TALE.

Robert Burns

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATUES

OF

TAM O'SHANTER & SOUTER JOHNNY.

NOW EXHIBITING.

LINES

WRITTEN ON SEEING MR. THOM'S SCULPTURE OF TAM O'SHANTER AND
SOUTER JOHNNY: BY W. AINSLIE, M.D.

That the great bard—what need to tell the name?—
In after times, should still more mighty be,
At Heaven's command, behold! a *Garrick* came,
And both were crown'd with immortality!

So to the earth, in these our later days,
Was *Thom*, with his soul-breathing chisel, sent;
That *Burns*, enwreath'd in everlasting bays,
Might speak again in living adamant!

Morning Post.

*From Aug. 21, 1905.
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TAM O' SHANTER;

A TALE.

WHEN chapmen billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,
As market-days are wearin late,
And fouk begin to tak the gate ;
While we sit bousin at the nappy,
And getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gatherin her brows like gatherin storm,
Nursin her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest TAM O' SHANTER,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses
For honest men and bonny lasses.)

O TAM! hadst thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife KATE's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum ;
That, frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober ;
That ilka melder wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller ;
That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roarin fou on ;
That at the L—d's house, even on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied that, late or soon,
Thou wad be found deep drown'd in Doon ;
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By ALLOWAY's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how mony counsels sweet,

How mony lengthen'd sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises !

But to our tale : Ae market night,
TAM had got planted unco right ;
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats that drank divinely ;
And at his elbow SOUTER JOHNNY,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony ;
TAM lo'ed him like a very brither ;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter ;
And aye the ale was growin better ;
The Landlady and TAM grew gracious,
Wi' favours secret, sweet, and precious ;
The SOUTER tauld his queerest stories :
The Landlord's laugh was ready chorus ;
The storm without might rare and rustle,
TAM didna mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel' amang the nappy :
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure.
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure :
Kings may be blest, but TAM was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious !

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed ;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever ;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place ;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.—
Nae man can tether time or tide ;
The hour approaches TAM maun ride ;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in ;
And sic a night he taks the road in
As ne'er puir sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last ;
The rattling showers rose on the blast ;

The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd ;
 Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd :
 That night a child might understand
 The deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare MEG,
 A better never lifted leg,
 TAM skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
 Despising wind, and rain, and fire ;
 Whiles hauding fast his gude blue bonnet ;
 Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet ;
 Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
 Lest bogles catch him unawares ;
 KIRK-ALLOWAY was drawing nigh,
 Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
 Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd ;
 And past the birks and meikle stane,
 Whare drunken CHARLIE brak's neck-bane ;
 And thro the whins, and by the cairn,
 Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn ;
 And near the thorn, aboon the well,
 Whare MUNGO's mither hang'd hersel.—
 Before him Doon pours a' his floods ;
 The doubling storm roars through the woods ;
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole ;
 Near and more near the thunders roll ;
 When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
 KIRK-ALLOWAY seem'd in a bleeze ;
 Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing ;
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.—

Inspiring bold JOHN BARLEYCORN !
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn !
 Wi' tippenny we fear nae evil ;
 Wi' usquabae we'll face the deevil !—
 The swats sae ream'd in TAMMIE's noddle,
 Fair play, he cares na deils a bodle.
 But MAGGIE stood right sair astonished,
 Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
 She ventured forward on the light ;
 And, vow ! TAM saw an unco sight !

Warlocks and witches in a dance ;
 Nae cotillian brent new frae FRANCE,
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
 Put life and mettle in their heels.

A winnock-bunker in the east,
 There sat auld NICK in shape o' beast ;
 A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
 To gie them music was his charge :
 He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl
 Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.—
 Coffins stood round like open presses,
 That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses :
 And by some deevilish cantrip sleight,
 Each in its cauld hand held a light.—
 By which heroic TAM was able
 To note upon the haly table,
 A murderer's banes in gibbet-airns ;
 Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns ;
 A thief, new-cutted frae a raip,
 Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape ;
 Five tomahawks, wi' blude red-rusted ;
 Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted ;
 A garter, which a babe had strangled ;
 A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
 Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
 The grey hairs yet stack to the heft ;
 Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
 Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As TAMMIE glowr'd, amazed, and curious,
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious :
 The piper loud and louder blew ;
 The dancers quick and quicker flew ;
 They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
 Till ikla carlin swat and reekit,
 And coost her duddies to the wark,
 And linket at it in her sark !

Now TAM, O TAM ! had thae been queans,
 A' plump and strappin' in their teens ;
 Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
 Been snaw-white se'enteen-hunder linen !

Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
 That ance were plush o' guid blue hair,
 I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,
 For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!

But whither'd beldams, auld and droll,
 Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
 Lowping and flinging on a crummock,
 I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But TAM kenn'd was what fu' brawlie,
 There was ae winsome wench and walie,
 That night enlisted in the core,
 (Lang after kenn'd on CARRICK shore!
 For mony a beast to dead she shot,
 And perish'd mony a bonny boat,
 And shook baith muckle corn and bear,
 And kept the country side in fear;))
 Her cutty sark, o' Paisly harn,
 That while a lassie she had worn,
 In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
 It was her best, and she was vauntie.—
 Ah! little kenn'd thy reverend grannie,
 That sark she coft for her wee NANNIE,
 Wi' twa pund Scots, ('twas a' her riches,))
 Wad ever graced a dance of witches!

But here my muse her wing maun cour;
 Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r;
 To sing how NANNIE lap and flang,
 (A souple jade she was and strang,))
 And how TAM stood, like ane bewitch'd
 And thought his very een enrich'd;
 Even Satan glowr'd, and fidget fu' fain,
 And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main:
 Till first ae caper, syne anither,
 TAM tint his reason a'thegither,
 And roars out, "Well done, Cutty-sark!")
 And in an instant a' was dark;
 And scarcely had he MAGGIE rallied,
 When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
 When plundering herds assail their byke;

As open pussie's mortal foes,
 When, pop! she starts before their nose;
 As eager runs the market-crowd,
 When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
 So MAGGIE runs, the witches follow,
 Wi' monie an eldritch skreech and hollow.

Ah, TAM! ah, TAM! thou'lt get thy fairin!
 In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
 In vain thy KATE awaits thy comin!
 KATE soon will be a waefu' woman!
 Now, do thy speedy utmost, MEG,
 And win the key-stane* o' the brig;
 There at them thou thy tail may toss,
 A running stream they darena cross.
 But ere the key-stane she could make,
 The fient a tail she had to shake;
 For NANNIE, far before the rest,
 Hard upon noble MAGGIE prest,
 And flew at TAM wi' furious ettle;
 But little wist she MAGGIE's mettle—
 Ae spring brought off her master hale,
 But left behind her ain grey tail:
 The carlin claught her by the rump,
 And left poor MAGGIE scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
 Ilk man and mother's son, tak heed:
 Whene'er to drink you are inclined,
 Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
 Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
 Remember TAM o' SHANTER's mare.

* It is a well-known fact, that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream. It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveller, that when he falls in with bogles, whatever danger may be in his going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back.

EXTRACTS FROM THE PUBLIC JOURNALS.

TAM O'SHANTER AND SOUTER JOHNNY.

THESE figures, of which our readers have already heard so much, are at present exhibiting in Glasgow; and all may now have an opportunity of satisfying themselves, whether the praise which has been bestowed was founded in truth and judgment, or was merely the good-natured applause of Mr. Thom's friends. For ourselves, we feel they have not been over-praised. Indeed, it would be very difficult to do so. In general, when expectation is highly raised as to any object, there is a corresponding disappointment on examination. But this is not the case here; for, high as our expectations were, they were far below what awaited us; and this we know to have been the experience of many others. Few could previously imagine anything so perfect and complete as this *chef-d'œuvre* really is.

Mr. Thom has appeared at once before the world a sculptor, and one bearing the proud mark of genius. It is a high test of excellence in the fine arts, when any work bears repeated inspection without the relish for it being diminished. This Mr. Thom's figures do in a remarkable degree: we have examined them repeatedly and most minutely, and we can truly say, our admiration increases the oftener we behold them. Indeed, it is only after many examinations that all their beauties become completely developed.—*Glasgow Herald, Friday, Feb. 20, 1829.*

THIS Exhibition has afforded feelings of wonder and delight to every refined mind who has yet seen it. Scotland is proud of BURNS, and she must be equally proud of the sculptor of these inimitable statues. Born on the same soil—breathing the same atmosphere—and inspired only by nature and the poet, an obscure but highly-gifted individual has produced works by which he has astonished all who delight either in the triumph of genius, or the glory of art.

The figures are sitting in that attitude, the idea of which is conveyed in these lines:

“ Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right.
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi, reaming swats that drank divinely;
And at his elbow SOUTER JOHNNY,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony!”

The Sculptor has seized the moment when the Souter is in the act of telling one of his “queerest stories.” The sly leer lurking in his eye, the half-unconscious smile of gratification on his countenance, when he hears the loud laugh that his “clatter” has elicited from TAM, who, “unco happy,” is just raising *the horn* to his mouth, when his arm is arrested by the story of his companion, are depicted with the hand and the mind of a master. We say nothing of the costume of the figures, every thing is natural and characteristic.

The whole merits of these figures can neither be observed nor appreciated by one visit or two; but new beauties will infallibly strike the beholder every time he examines them.

The Sculptor, whose intellectual powers have prompted and enabled him to give the world such admirable works, should complete the picture with other characters from the same poem. We will not take it upon us to suggest any, but we trust soon to see an addition made to his present exhibition, which, from the feelings and associations that attach to it, will, we are sure, become the pleasing resort of the connoisseur, and the forenoon lounge of the beauty and fashion of Edinburgh.—*Edinburgh Dramatic Journal, Nov. 29, 1828.*

WE have just taken a glance at the two remarkable figures, of the life size, and executed in a kind of granite, of Tam o'Shanter and the Souter Johnny, which have made much noise in Scotland, and have now reached Bond-street for exhibition in the English capital. They are the work of James Thom, a native of Ayrshire, twenty-six years of age, and a common stone-mason, till these manifestations of a superior genius were produced. They are certainly very remarkable and

characteristic statues. The quiet hilarity of the Souter telling his queerest stories, and the uproarious merriment of honest Tam, are expressed in a style as true to nature as nature herself. Nor is the rude material ill suited to the persons represented; its gray colour and roughness, on the contrary, accord with the rustic and homely forms of the peasant and cobbler.

We recommend these extraordinary specimens of natural talent to the attention of the curious. They are to be placed in Burns' monument, near the scene of the poem.—*London Literary Gazette, April 18th, 1829.*

ANOTHER peep at Mr. Thom's "Tam o'Shanter and Souter Johnny," has confirmed, and indeed increased, the high opinion which a hasty glance induced us to pronounce upon them in our last number. When it is considered that they are the first works of a young country stone-mason, who had never seen a statue in his life, and who had had no opportunity of applying himself to those preparatory studies in which many artists spend so large a portion of time; and when it is considered that (as we understand) he commenced them at once, from the block, without having made any previous drawings or models,—they appear little less than miraculous. If any thing were wanting to confound the cold metaphysical reasoners, who contend that there is no such quality as genius, these statues would assuredly supply the deficiency. They go a great way also to shake, if they do not entirely overthrow, the long received opinion, that sculpture ought not to enjoy the range of painting, but ought strictly to confine itself to the representation of lofty or tragic character and expression. Unfeigned, however, as is our admiration of what Mr. Thom has thus produced, we should only flatter him, if we maintained that he had nothing to acquire. But we do most earnestly hope that he will not be so ungrateful to nature, who has done so much for him, as to desert her school; and that what he has yet to learn, and which regards details principally, he will learn where he has already profited so largely. We are the more solicitous on this head, because we well know that he will speedily be surrounded by persons who will continually prate to him about the antique and the classical. For the refined works of ancient art we have the greatest reverence; but is the human mind to be doomed perpetually to tread a beaten path? Poetry has long given up the heathen mythology; and none but school-boys and school-girls now rhyme about Mars, Venus, Apollo, "and the rest." Why are not the arts of design, occasionally at least, to follow their sister's example? One of the greatest charms of this young man's productions is their originality. Let him never sacrifice it. Let him scorn to be an imitator. Into close study we trust he will plunge; but let it be the study of life, breathing around him; let it not be study at second, or third, or fourth hand.

It is but justice to Mr. Thom to remark, that his statues are seen to exceeding disadvantage in the room in which they are at present placed. They are illuminated only by a reflection from a brick wall. The consequence is, that the lights are dim, and that the shadows want sharpness. As the material of which the figures are composed is itself of a middle tint, the indistinctness thus occasioned impairs, although it cannot destroy, their effect.—*Lond. Lit. Gaz. Apr. 25, 1829.*

OUR Scotch friends, resident in the metropolis, and the admirers of the northern Shakspeare, R. Burns, will thank us for announcing the safe arrival of those two important personages (Tam O'Shanter and Souter Johnny) in London. We had the pleasure, in common with many distinguished individuals, of paying them a special visit by invitation yesterday; and we recommend all who have a desire to look upon the actual incorporation of the Poet's imaginings in the creation of these celebrated boon companions, to lose no time in paying their respects to them. Such of our readers as may not have heard of these remarkable characters, will require to be told that they are two pieces of Sculpture, from the untutored chisel of a rude mason, a townsman of Burns; who, guided solely by the inborn light of genius, and his enthusiastic admiration of the Poet, has produced specimens from which the first masters of the art may take a lesson. It is seldom that the honours of Sculpture are given to any order of beings below the rank of deities, kings, heroes, and warriors; but those who go to see honest Tam, and his Companion, must shake off all recollection of the Apollo Belvidere, the Venus de Medicis, and

the Three Graces, and anticipate simply what the Poet has delighted to paint—Two ranting Chiels celebrating the Orgies of “John Barleycorn,” whose cheery features he certainly never imagined could be moulded to the same mockery of reality in the stubborn produce of the quarry, as in his own plastic verse. Such, however, is the case; and the Sculptor, it will be found, is worthy of his unrivalled author. The figures are cut out of dusky Ayrshire stone, which is so far suitable to the subject, that it gives a natural appearance to the habiliments, which no art probably could have imparted to Parian marble. Tam O’Shanter is seated at his ease in a spacious arm-chair, with a cherished jug of “tippenny” in his hand, his legs cased in a huge pair of Shetland ribbed hose, and armed with spurs at the heel, stretched out at length; and his countenance beaming the unspeakable delights of the inspiring liquor. The hero’s friend, Johnny, appears in equally happy mood, and the pair give as lively a representation of the original characters sketched out by Burns, as can well be imagined.

“Ae market night,
 Tam had got planted unco right,
 Past by an ingle, bleezing finely,
 Wi’ reaming swats that drank divinely;
 And at his elbow Souter Johnny,
 His ancient, trusty drouthy crony;
 Tam lo’ed him like a very brither;
 They had been fou for weeks thegither;
 The night drave on wi’ sangs and clatter,
 And aye the ale was growin better.
 * * * * *
 The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
 The landlord’s laugh was ready chorus;
 The storm without night rare and rustle,
 Tam didna mind the storm a whistle.
 Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
 E’en drown’d himsel amang the nappy:
 As bees flee hame wi’ lades o’ treasure,
 The minutes wing’d their way wi’ pleasure;
 Kings may be blest, but TAM was glorious,
 O’er all the ills o’ life victorious!”

Eminent Sculptors, who were incredulous of the reported merits of these productions, have confessed their unmingled surprise and pleasure on viewing them. So admirably chiselled are the hose of Tam, that the spectator can hardly persuade himself, without touching them, that they are not genuine knitted woollens. The same may be said of other parts of the dress, which fit so naturally to the body, that it is hard to believe they are not real. In conception of the design, as well as in the execution, it may indeed be said, that the Sculptor has cast his material in the identical mould of the Poet’s fancy.—*London Courier, April 21.*

WHILE among connoisseurs, Titian is admired for his golden tints—Guido, for his heavenly countenances—Rembrandt, for his masterly sparkling lights; and the great masters each are awarded with admiration for their more lofty attributes:—Morland, as a painter, in his less elevated walk of the art, was not less famous in his line, nor without admirers of his works; and even Hogarth, where he twisted scenes of low life into satirical purposes, was held in much higher reputation for the touches of his truthful pencil, than a caricaturist merely ordinarily can expect. Excellence is not confined to any particular description of subjects, but is capable of being acquired by superior method and style in any department. Genius may be as apparent in the application of the brush of the house painter, as in the pencil of a Reubens.

Mr. Thom’s productions have not for recommendations the fine texture of the material—the high polish and delicate whiteness of alabaster; they are the conceptions of a strong mind, boldly executed on a material of a corresponding hue with the rusticity of the subject: instead of delicacy and whiteness, the two “drouthy cronies” appear in “hodden grey” stone.

The Souter is supposed to have just concluded one of his “queerest stories;” and Tam, who is “unco happy,” is finishing a hearty soul-immersing laugh, such as the Ettrick Shepherd would, perhaps, designate a “great guffa.” The sly leeriness is admirable that is in the expression of the Souter’s eye, who is a perfect crack in his own way, who “gets drunk purely from a love of sobriety,”

by drinking other people's liquor that they may be kept sober ; he is pleased at the effects of his droll tale on Tam, who is supposed to stand treat for his ale. Tam is in the act of lifting the horn to his mouth, which apparently has been arrested on its way, by the intervention of Johnny's joke. The Souter sits with the jug balanced on his knee, ready to replenish the horn when need requires. The character of both the figures are executed with masterly freedom and skill, and will bear the most critical analysis. The costume—the minute attention to the knitting of the home-made stockings—the every thing that is necessary to bring out the design, is at once embraced. If, in viewing sculpture generally, we share feelings of amazement, mixed with admiration—in viewing these, we must add to the other two impressions, that they excited merriment, and involuntarily we joined Tam in the laugh at the Souter's story. One thing struck us as peculiarly characteristic in the group, and marked the Artist's nicety of observation—the position of the Souter's toes, turned in a little, which we believe is generally the case with shoemakers, in consequence of the habit which they acquire from the posture to which they are confined whilst at work.

Mr. Thom, besides striking out a new era in statuary, (what is rarely accomplished) has at once, in this triumph of his art, soared to the highest flight of genius of this description ; and, as Burns, the author of the tale of Tam O'Shanter, is justly esteemed the best of Scottish Poets—Mr. Thom, the self-taught, has as decidedly proved himself the most original Sculptor that Scotland ever produced ; and we have no doubt that in England his merit will be justly appreciated.

The Artist is in his twenty-sixth year ; he is a native of the parish of Tarbolton, in Ayrshire. It is rather remarkable that the same county should have given birth to both the Poet and the Sculptor of the design ; and that the fruitful tale of Tam O'Shanter should have furnished scope for their two master pieces.—*London Morning Advertiser, April 20.*

TAM O'SHANTER and Souter Johnny, which have excited so much attention at Edinburgh, have been brought to London for exhibition ; they are the work of Mr. Thom, a self-taught Sculptor, whose genius, like that of the bard to whom he has dedicated his talents, has raised him at once to fame, and will, we trust, eventually to fortune, with very little assistance from art. Indeed, when we saw, on Saturday, at the private view, the two figures of Tam O'Shanter and his friend Souter Johnny, we could not hesitate to acknowledge them at once as first-rate productions. The material out of which they are cut is Scottish freestone, and there is a degree of truth—of spirit—almost of life, about them, that makes it difficult, indeed, to conceive them the work of a common stonemason, and executed without even the intervention of a model, or so much as a drawing, but merely from the contemplation of his own and his neighbours' persons, with the occasional inspection of the limbs of some sturdy peasant. Although the excellence of the anatomy—the spirit of the attitude—and the genius displayed in the very folds of honest Tam's coat, established him at once our favourite ; the rich humour portrayed in the Souter's countenance, and the whole contour of the figure, stamp it as a masterly production.—*London, Globe, April 20.*

It has been always the practice with schoolmen, to consider genius as the offspring of art, rather than as the parent of such works as are destined to go down to posterity. That this remark is applicable to what has been called the British School of Sculpture, we have had abundant testimony in the inanimate blocks of marble which have been exhibited from time to time in the various pieces of sepulture and public exhibitions, under the cognomen of monuments and effigies. That such works have, in a great majority of cases, been monuments of dulness, even though they have the distinction of R. A. attached to their artist's name, cannot admit of a doubt : but, if any doubt remained, the two Groups of Sculpture now exhibiting in Bond Street, and at Charing Cross, would set the question at rest. Mr. Carew's beautiful groups of Vulcan and Venus—Arethusa and Adonis, we have already noticed briefly, as a splendid specimen of native talent. But the work of Mr. Thom is altogether a more extraordinary, and more essential specimen of native genius. The work of Mr. Carew is a very classical and beautiful delineation of character, illustrative of the Heathen Mythology. But Mr. Thom,

who, we understand, is quite a young man, and self-taught, has at once struck out a most finished work, illustrative of two of the happiest creations of that delightful Poet of nature, Robert Burns. Whoever has read Burns (and who has not?) will, on visiting the extraordinary productions of Mr. Thom's chisel, acknowledge the stone to be living figures. The rubiconed boniface of Souter Johnny, combined with an arch expression about the eyes, and a consciousness of producing an excitement in his auditor, is masterly conceived, and finely executed. But the figure of Tam O'Shanter is truly a magical imitation of active life. The open mouth, half-closed eyes, and every muscle of the face drawn into action, as if in the full enjoyment of mirth and jollity; while the repose of the whole figure, and particularly the left leg drawn under the chair, is executed in a manner quite marvellous. We should have thought it impossible for a man who has not minutely studied anatomical proportions, to have produced such a splendid specimen of the chisel, as this figure. The roughness of the material was also against the Artist. A brown free stone, though admirably adapted for a monument to the Poet, is by no means so striking for exhibition as a work in marble. In short, on looking at this figure, it is scarcely possible to understand by what magic so much effect has been produced by an uneducated Artist, with such materials as rough freestone, and such materials as form the story of these works of art. If the great Scottish Poet has left an imperishable name, we have no hesitation in saying, that his illustration will be worthy of equal honour, if the two other figures, which are to constitute the monument, are equal to the two now exhibiting. The exhibition is not only worthy of a visit from every amateur, but it affords a fine study for juvenile artists, in every branch of the fine arts.—*British Traveller*, April 23, 1829.

Two statues, life-size, of this celebrated pair of merry-makers, have just been brought to London from Edinburgh, where they have excited great attention. The sculptor is a Mr. Thom, of Ayrshire, a common stone-mason, but whose surprising genius promises to raise him far above his former humble sphere of employment. While art has done nothing for him, we may safely say that nature has left nothing undone; we have certainly never seen any productions of un-instructed genius which can be brought into comparison with these statues. His only models have been the peasantry of his neighbourhood—his only guide the works of the poet Burns; but these have inspired him with energy and truth.

The quiet humour of the Souter, who has just cracked one of his best jokes, and the hearty mirth of Tam, is inimitable; the latter, about to raise the cup of "reaming swats" to his lips, suspends it mid-way, and enjoys an unchecked laugh, while his companion seems to participate in the merriment he has excited. Nature herself is before the spectator in the figure, the dress, and the manner of the toppers; Tam, especially, is represented with a truth and ease which both astonishes and delights; indeed, so completely has the Sculptor here entered into the spirit of his subject, that though he never himself saw the original Tam o'Shanter, he has (as we were confidently assured by persons who were intimate with Burns' hero) given a wonderfully correct idea, not only of his form and manner, but even of his countenance. We should not omit to award him due credit also for the anatomical symmetry of both figures. They are cut out of blocks of the roughest sandstone, and are intended for the monument of Burns, near Alloway Kirk, the scene of Tam's subsequent adventures. It is singular that the Poet, and the Sculptor who has so well illustrated him, own the same birth-place.—*London Morning Post*, April 22, 1829.

OUR London readers have possibly heard something already of the self-taught sculptor, Mr. Thom, of Ayrshire, in Scotland; but if they have not, they will see a specimen of his art in the two figures, Tam o'Shanter and Souter Johnny, with a private view of which we have been indulged.

The incident selected by the rude sculptor,—who, without the aid of models, without the tedious education of the Italian school, without any of those advantages which are supposed to minister to genius and give grace to art, has chosen to give life to the stone of his native country, and form to the graphic conceptions of Burns,—is that where Tam, the hero, is "glorious" over his cups with his

“ ancient trusty drouthy crony.” They are seated on their separate chairs in the alehouse. The Souter, with a tankard in his hand, and his pressing thumb ready to raise its lid, when about to raise it to his lips, appears to have told one of his best jokes, at which Tam is in all the raptures of a loud and uproarious laugh. The quaint smile on the face of the Souter, pleased at the effects of his own story, silently happy over the noisy “ guffan ” of his companion—his countenance jocund, gently risible, and excited partly by the home-brewed and the sociality of Tam—is one of the most exquisite expressions we ever saw in either ancient or modern sculpture. Tam himself is reeling more from laughter than from ale. The glass is in his hand, but all its spirit, and the spirit of the Souter’s joke, is in his face. He absolutely lives and laughs before you. It is impossible for the spectator not to conceive himself in the alehouse, and the tankard full ; nay, you could almost put your hand into the Souter’s pocket, it stands forth so invitingly upon the stone.

As works of art, they are, in their way, quite unrivalled, and we only regret Mr. Thom does not cease hewing the freestone, and take to marble. He is a man of inimitable talent, and we sincerely hope that the exhibition will be honoured by every person of taste and every admirer of merit in the metropolis.—*London Star*, April 22, 1829.

As we have sometimes thought that the natives of North Briton are sufficiently inclined to laud each other, as well as to eulogize the land of their birth, we confess that we rather expected to find, in the works of art before us, a proof that the Scotch critics had over-shot the mark in praising as they have, the young Ayrshire sculptor, Mr. Thom. But we have been most agreeably disappointed ; for though some of the writers alluded to have, we believe, ranked the able artist among those who have shone in the very highest class of art (which is a mistake)—namely, that which is understood by the severe and classical—yet most of those we have perused have certainly done him no more than justice in saying, that he is a man of genius, and that his Tam o’Shanter and Souter Johnny abundantly prove the assertion. For appropriate expression, ease and propriety of action,—for the general air of truth which prevails throughout, as well in the mirth-moving countenances, as in the rude and clownish draperies,—nothing can well be better ; but, however gratifying it may be to see such extraordinary merit in the first attempt of a young, uneducated man, in a difficult walk of art too—that of sculpture—we must wait and see how he will present not only *naked* figures, but figures “ of the highest order of fine forms,” not those of common-life and in gross and coarse pursuits, before we can be duly qualified to judge of the prospect he has of taking his place among the Gibsons, the Westmacots, and the Carews, his highly gifted contemporaries. Of the English newspapers which have noticed these exceedingly humorous performances, the *Morning Journal* has spoken of it in a manner, as it seems to us, most calculated to do justice both to the artist and the public ; and we therefore shorten our own task by borrowing the description of the two figures given by the judicious writer who conducts the department of Fine Arts in that journal :—

“ The incident selected by the rude sculptor, who has chosen to give life to the stone of his native country, and form to the graphic conceptions of Burns, is that where Tam, the hero, is ‘ glorious ’ over his cups with his ‘ ancient, trusty, drouthy crony.’ They are seated on their separate chairs in the ale-house. The Souter, with a tankard in his hand, and his pressing thumb ready to lift its lid, when about to raise it to his lips, appears to have told one of his best jokes, at which Tam is in all the raptures of a loud and uproarious laugh. The quaint smile on the face of the Souter, pleased at the effects of his own story—silently happy over the noisy ‘ guffan ’ of his companion—his countenance jocund, gently risible, and excited partly by the home-brewed and the sociality of Tam,—is one of the most exquisite expressions we ever saw in either ancient or modern sculpture. Tam himself is reeling more from laughter than from ale. The glass is in his hand ; but all its spirit, and the spirit of the Souter’s joke, is in his face. He absolutely lives and laughs before you. It is impossible for the spectator not to conceive himself in the ale-house, and the tankard full. Nay, you could almost put your hand into the Souter’s pocket, it stands forth so invitingly upon the stone.—As works of art,

they are, *in their way*, quite unrivalled, and we only regret that Mr. Thom does not cease hewing the freestone, and take to marble. He is a man of inimitable talent, and we sincerely hope that the exhibition will be honoured by every person of taste, and every admirer of merit in the metropolis."—*London Examiner*, April 26, 1829.

WE cannot agree with those of our contemporaries who have expressed regret that these sculptures are not in marble. On the contrary, we think them much better in the humble unpretending material in which they have been executed; and the very homeliness of which, enhances one of the principal merits on which the works themselves rest for the praise which has been, by no means unsparingly bestowed on them—that, namely, of propriety; or, if the term may be allowed us, of appropriateness. The stone, in short, is quite in keeping both with the figures, and the execution; and we doubt much whether the group would produce half the effect it does at present, had it been worked in a finer material. Souter Johnny is certainly an admirably characteristic figure; his broad, quietly humorous visage—his fatness—his ease of attitude—his drapery, and broad buttons, are all expressed with the utmost fidelity to life and nature. The Souter's apron and collar, especially, are capitally done: the difference of character, also, in the two cronies, is perfectly imagined, and well maintained, not more in the physiognomy, than throughout the figures.

The figures, both in design and execution, have a dash of rudeness, well suited to them under all circumstances, considering that they are intended for a monument to a rustic Poet, near the Alloway Kirk, in Ayrshire.—*The Athenæum*, and *Literary Chronicle*, April 29.

Two highly characteristic and admirably executed statues, the work of an untaught artist, a native of Scotland, named Thom, are now exhibiting in Old Bond street. They are intended to be illustrative of the humorous tale of Burns; and they are so, with a degree of perfection which cannot be surpassed. Nothing can more completely realise the idea of the poet, than those two figures of the sculptor, his countryman and admirer, who, like himself, owes his success entirely to his own native genius, unassisted by the advantages of education. The triumph he has achieved is the more surprising when we find, that this the first attempt he has made to imitate the human form at full length, and that these figures have been finished without the usual aid of casts and models, and were hewn out of the solid stone to embody the just and clear conception with which the artist was inspired.

The attitudes of Tam O'Shanter and Souter Johnny are both strikingly expressive of the parts assigned to them in the poem, which thus describes them:—

But to our tale: Ae market night
 Tam had got planted unco right;
 Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
 Wi' reaming swats that drank divinely;
 And at his elbow Souter Johnny,
 His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony
 Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
 They had been fou for weeks thegither.
 The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
 And aye the ale was growin' better;

The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
 The Landlord's laugh was ready chorus;
 The storm without might rare and rustle,
 Tam didna mind the storm a whistle.
 Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
 E'en drown'd himsel' amang the nappy;
 As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
 The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure;
 Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
 O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

Tam sits in an arm-chair, with a glass of ale in his hand, laughing openly and heartily, and with that full appearance of unmingled delight, which belongs to a man in his happy situation. The Souter, we should imagine, has just been repeating some of his stories, and is smiling with a sly air, and that sinister ex-

pression of the mouth, which marks his character. He holds the tankard in his hand, with his thumb securely fixed on the lid. The dresses of each are remarkably appropriate. Tam wears his "gude blue bonnet" and a smart suit, with Shetland hose drawn over his legs. The Souter has his night-cap on his head, and his cobler's apron spread over his body. Their persons are excellently contrasted: Tam is tall and athletic, Johnny short and squab. Tam is evidently fit for the encounter he is destined to undergo with Old Nick and the Witches; but the Souter seems qualified only to drink ale and laugh at his own jests. "Heroic Tam," we can see, feels fully the sentiments—

Wi' tippenny we fear nae evil;
 Wi' usquabae, we'll face the Deevil!
 The swats so rean'd in Tammie's noddle
 Pair play, he cares na deils a bodle.

Johnny, on the other hand, is not manifestly disposed to seek for adventures beyond the ale room. He is lazy, careless, and sensual, while Tam has a certain degree of dignity and grace.

The workmanship of these figures, in their minute parts, is as good as in their general design and execution. The accuracy with which the materials of the dresses are represented is quite astonishing; and the coarse and rough appearance of Tam's hands is admirably true to nature. The countenances are equally excellent; colour and motion are indeed only wanting to render the illusion so perfect, that nobody could fail to be convinced that these figures are actually those of living men. Great expectations may be entertained as to the future productions of an artist who has risen thus rapidly to the highest station in his profession, and who has adopted the popular style of representing the manners of the day. We entirely agree with those who think that this is the true course for English sculpture, and that nothing can be more ridiculous or tame than the imitations of the mythological beings of the Egyptian and Greek superstitions, to which our artists have hitherto confined their efforts. Mr. Thom is not only an eminent member of his profession, but he will have the singular honour of being its first and chief reformer.—*London Observer, April 26th, 1829.*

THIS exhibition has pleased us mightily. It is so much the fashion to suppose that the art of sculpture can only be brought to bear on dying swains—love-sick nymphs—*et id genus omne*, that we were delighted to find there was one man within the king's dominions, who was bold enough to break through this ceremony of custom, and show the world that sculpture is as capable as painting, of expressing the more whimsical features of humanity. Mr. Thom, the self-taught Sculptor of these two well-known characters, has imbibed, with a genuine relish, the true spirit in which their author conceived them; and, bearing in mind the union of feeling that has brought Tam O'Shanter and Souter Johnny together, has skilfully contrived so to vary the intrinsic humour of each, that, while they cordially harmonize as a pair, they are, at the same time, sufficiently distinct as a couple of individuals.—*London Spectator, May 2, 1829.*

TAM O'SHANTER AND SOUTER JOHNNY.

THE Stone in which the above Statues are executed, is a hard free-stone, got on the Estate of Auchincruive (the property of R. A. Oswald, Esq.), situated on the banks of the Ayr; the colour is the natural tint of the stone.



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